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Fast-Breaking Zakat

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Fast-Breaking Zakat

All the praises and thanks be to Allah, the Lord of the 'Alamîn (mankind, jinn and all that exists). Prayers and peace of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon all his family and companions.

The following is a synopsis about the fast-breaking zakat. I ask Allah to benefit everyone from it and that He accepts their zakat and the rest of their deeds.

The meaning of fast-breaking zakat

It is the zakat caused by breaking the fast after Ramadan. It is also called the fast-breaking charity. The texts mentioned the two terms.

It is called the fast-breaking alms as it is a donation upon breaking the fast for the sake of being rewarded by Allah. Giving it willingly to the deserved persons in its due time shows the real desire for such reward. It is called "zakat" as paying it -for the sake of Allah alone- purifies the soul from its filth, augments it for deeds and redresses its defects.

It is added to breaking the fast as it is the reason for it. It is obligated by the breaking the fast after Ramadan -after completing the month by seeing the crescent- it is thus added to it because it is obligated by it.

The date of its legalization and the evidence for that:

It was ordained in the second year of the migration - i.e. with Ramadan. The evidence of its legality is the Quran in general, the clear authenticated Sunnah and the consensus of all Muslims. Allah Almighty has said, {Indeed whosoever purifies himself (by avoiding polytheism and accepting Islâmic Monotheism) shall achieve success} [Surat Al-A'lâ 87:14] i.e. he who purifies himself by alms succeeds and totally wins.

{قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن تَزَكَّى} الأعلى: ١٤

Transliteration: Qad aflaha man tazakka

Umar ibn Abdul Aziz, may Allah have mercy on him, used to order for the fast-breaking zakat and recite the previous verse.



Ikrima, may Allah have mercy on him, said about that verse, “it is the man who provides his zakat before him”; meaning before his prayer; i.e. “the feast.”

Several predecessors, may Allah Almighty have mercy on them, said about such verse that it is the fast-breaking zakat.

Ibn Khuzaymah and others reported traceable Hadith for the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him.

Malik, may Allah have mercy on him, said that it -the fast-breaking zakat- is included in the general meaning of the saying of Allah Almighty {and give Zakât}.

{وَآتُواْ الزَّكَاةَ}

Transliteration: waatoo alzzakata

It is established in the two authenticated books of Hadith and others from different ways that, “The Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has ordained the fast-breaking zakat.”

«فرض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم زكاة الفطر» متفق عليه

Muslims at all times agree unanimously about it. The people in the Medina did not consider any other charity better than it.

Its ruling:

Ibn Al-Munther, may Allah have mercy on him, and others have a unanimous consensus that it is obligatory. Isaac, may Allah have mercy on him, said, “It is like consensus.”

I say, “It is enough evidence for its obligation -with the ability in time- that the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, expressed it as obligatory, as has been declared by ibn ‘Umar and ibn Abbas.”

Ibn ‘Umar, may Allah be pleased with them, said “The Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, ordained the fast-breaking zakat”. Such Hadith and others with the same meaning were expressed by others, may Allah be pleased with them.



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The philosophy behind its legalization:

The fast-breaking zakat has been legalized to purify the soul from its filth; like avarice and other bad morals. It is ordained to purify fasting from what can affect it or diminish its rewards such as vain talk, obscenity and the like. Fast-breaking zakat is ordained to compliment the reward and to develop the good deeds. It consoles the poor and the needy and prevents them from the humility of asking others on the feast day.

Ibn Abbas narrated a traceable Hadith that, "The Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has ordained the fast-breaking zakat as a purification for the fasting person from vain talk and obscenity and as a feeding for the needy." [Reported by Abu Dawud and authenticated by Al-Albani]

«عن ابن عباس قال: فرض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم زكاة الفطر طهرة للصائم من اللغو والرفث وطعمة للمساكين» رواه أبو داود وصححه الألباني

It contains: showing the gratification for the grace of Allah Almighty that His slave has completed the fasting of Ramadan, has easily performed the night prayers and the performance of righteous deeds through it.

It contains: prevailing love and cordiality among the groups of the Islamic society.

For whom it is obligatory:

The Fast-breaking zakat is a zakat upon every person. It is obligatory upon every Muslim; whether male or female, free or slave, whether one lives in cities, villages or deserts by the consensus of the significant Muslims. That is why some of the predecessors paid it in behalf of the unborn child.

I say: it is not obligatory to be paid on behalf of the unborn children. But it may be considered as a gratitude for the gift (the unborn child) of Allah and a wish for this gift to be virtuous.

Among the evidence that it is obligatory:

The Hadith of Ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, who said, "The Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, ordained the fast-



breaking zakat as a sâ' (One Sâ' = 3 Kilograms approx.) of dates or a sâ' of barley upon Muslim free men as well as on slaves, male and female and young and old people. He ordained it to be paid before people went out to offer the feast prayer." [Reported by Al-Bukhari]

«فرض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم زكاة الفطر، صاعا من تمر أو صاعا من شعير، على العبد والحر، والذكر والأنثى، والصغير والكبير، من المسلمين، وأمر بها أن تؤدى قبل خروج الناس إلى الصلاة» رواه البخاري

There are other Hadiths with the same meaning that declare the obligation and enjoin the zakat. However, it is obligatory on the rich – the rich in this issue is not the same as the rich in the issue of money zakat. In the fast-breaking zakat, the rich is the one who has still a remaining sâ' on the day or night of the feast from his food and the food of his children and those whom he must sustain.

As for those who are not responsible such as the orphans, the insane and the like, their legal custodians pay it from their money. If they do not have money, so he pays for those whom he must sustain; for the general meaning of the Hadith narrated from the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, that he has said, "Pay the fast-breaking zakat for those whom you supply with provisions." [Declared good by Al-Albani]

«أدوا الفطر عمن تمونون» حسنه الألباني

The kinds of foods from which the fast-breaking zakat is paid:

It was proved in the Authenticated Book of Hadith that Abu Sa'îd Al-Khudry, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "We paid it – i.e. the fast-breaking zakat – in the time of the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, as a sâ' of food, a sâ' of date, a sâ' of barley or a sâ' of raisin". [Agreed upon]

«كنا نعطيها في زمان النبي صلى الله عليه وسلم صاعا من طعام، أو صاعا من تمر، أو صاعا من شعير، أو صاعا من زبيب» متفق عليه

In another narration in the Authenticated Book of Hadith, he said, "Our foods were the barley, raisin, cheese and dates." [Reported by Al-Bukhari]

«وكان طعامنا الشعير والزبيب والإقط والتمر» رواه البخاري



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It is better to be confined to these mentioned kinds as long as they are available and there are people who accept them as foods; so one pays the best and most useful of them for the poor. It is reported that ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, used to pay it in dates. It is reported that, "Ibn Umar did not pay the fast-breaking zakat but in dates, except for one time in which he paid it in barley as the people of Medina were in need for dates – i.e. there were no dates in Medina, so he paid it in barley." [Al-Albani, Its chain of transmission is authentic]

« وكان ابن عمر إذا أعطى أعطى التمر إلا عاما واحدا أعوز من التمر فأعطى شعيرا» الألباني، إسناده صحيح

It is an alert that it is a must to pay the best and most useful for them. In the schools of Malik, Shafei, Ahmed and the majority of scholars wheat is the best and dates come following. Allah Almighty has said, {By no means shall you attain Al-Birr (piety, righteousness - here it means Allâh's Reward, i.e. Paradise), unless you spend (in Allâh's Cause) of that which you love;} [Surat Al-'Imrân 3:92]

{لَن تَنَالُواْ الْبِرَّ حَتَّى تُنفِقُواْ مِمَّا تُحِبُّونَ}آل عمران: ٩٢

Transliteration: Lan tanaloo albirra hatta tunfiqoo mimma tuhibboona

Therefore, paying it from one of such kinds, if there are people who accept them as a food, is better as it will be corresponding to the Sunnah and a precaution for one's religion. If they are not available, it can be paid in the rest of the foods of the country.

Some scholars - Malik, al-Shafei, Ahmed and others, argued that each feeding grains and fruits are acceptable, even if they are not among the mentioned five kinds. This is the choice of Sheikh of Islam Ibn Taymiyyah who argued by His Almighty's saying, {on a scale of the average of that with which you feed your own families,} [Surat Al-Mâ'idah 5:89]

{مِنْ أَوْسَطِ مَا تُطْعِمُونَ أَهْلِيكُمْ}المائدة: ٨٩

Transliteration: min awsati ma tutAAimoona ahleekum

He also argued by the saying of the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him in the two authentic books of hadeeth, "A sâ' of food."

«...صاعا من طعام...» متفق عليه



Food can be wheat or barley. He said, "This is the saying of the majority of scholars and the most right saying. The basis of alms is that they are obligated as a consolation for the poor".

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "This is the right saying that bears no other interpretation. The aim is to fulfill the need of the poor on the feast day and to console them from the same kinds of food of the people of their country.

I say, "This is an exercise of judgment from such distinguished imams, may Allah Almighty have mercy on them. There is no doubt, however, that if one of the kinds which have been mentioned by the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, and are accepted by some as their usual food; otherwise, if other kinds are more preferable and easier for people, so they are worthier that the fast-breaking zakat be paid in as they fulfill the consolation and sufficiency. The Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said, "Righteousness is what the self is satisfied with and the heart is assured with; the sin is what has been weaved in the soul and roamed in the chest, even if people give you a religious opinion, even if they give you a religious opinion." [Al-Albani, good by the virtue of another]

«البر ما اطمأنت إليه النفس، واطمأن إليه القلب، والإثم ما حاك في القلب، وتردد في الصدر وإن أفتاك الناس وأفتوك» الألباني، حسن لغيره

Abu Sa'îd Al-Khudri, may Allah be pleased with him, said, "As for me, I am still paying it as I used to do in the time of the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him. i.e. a sâ', not a half sâ', of food."

The obligatory amount in the fast-breaking zakat:

It is proved in the authenticated Hadiths that the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has ordained the fast-breaking zakat as a sâ'.

What is meant by it:

It is the sâ' of the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, which is four 'half bushels'. A 'half bushel' is the fill of the two palms of a man of average sized hands from good wheat and the like grains. They are about two kilos and a half. The excess of the due measure can be intended as general charity. Allah Almighty has said, {So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom (or a small ant) shall see it.} [Surat Az-Zalzalah 99:7]



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{فَمَن يَعْمَلْ مِثْقَالَ ذَرَّةٍ خَيْراً يَرَهُ} الزلزلة: ٧

Transliteration: Faman yaAAmal mithqala tharratin khayran yarahu

The time of paying the zakat:

There are two times for paying the fast-breaking zakat:

The first: a virtue time that starts from the sunset of the feast eve until the time of the feast prayer. The best of it is the time between the dawn prayer and the feast prayer as it is proved in the Authenticated Book from the Hadith of ibn Umar, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, that, “The Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has ordained the fast-breaking zakat”, till the rest of the Hadith.

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In such Hadith, he said, “He has ordained it to be paid before people’s going out to perform the [feast] prayer.” [Agreed upon]

«...وأمر بها أن تؤدى قبل خروج الناس إلى الصلاة» متفق عليه

The interpretation of some of the predecessors about the saying of Allah Almighty, {Indeed whosoever purifies himself (by avoiding polytheism and accepting Islâmic Monotheism) shall achieve success, (14) And remembers (glorifies) the Name of his Lord (worships none but Allâh), and prays (five compulsory prayers and Nawâfil - additional prayers).} [Surat Al-A’lâ :14-15]

{قَدْ أَفْلَحَ مَن تَزَكَّى (١٤) وَذَكَرَ اسْمَ رَبِّهِ فَصَلَّى} الأعلى: ١٤-١٥

Transliteration: Qad aflaha man tazakka (14) Wathakara isma rabbihi fasalla

that it is the man who pays his fast-breaking zakat before performing his [feast] prayer.

The second: a permissible rewarded time that is one or two days before the feast day, as in the authenticated book of al-Bukhari, may Allah have mercy on him, that

he said, "They, i.e. the companions, used to pay -i.e. the needy- one or two days before fast breaking." It was a unanimous agreement by them. In the Hadith of ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, "if anyone pays it before the [feast] prayer, it will be an accepted zakat and if anyone pays it after the [feast] prayer, it will be a charity like other charities." [Reported by Ibn Majjah and declared good by Al-Albani]

«فمن أداها قبل الصلاة فهي زكاة مقبولة ومن أداها بعد الصلاة فهي صدقة من الصدقات»
رواه ابن ماجه وحسنه الألباني

Ibn al-Qayyim, may Allah have mercy on him, said: "Accordingly, it is not permissible to delay it after the feast prayer".

I say, "i.e. without an excuse. It is missed by finishing the feast prayer".

Sheikh of Islam said, "If he delays it to be paid after the feast prayer, it is then a make-up for, it is not abated by the end of its due time."

Others said, "Scholars agreed that it is not abated for those whom it is obligatory by delaying it. It is rather a debt until he pays it. Delaying it after the feast day is forbidden. If he intentionally delays it, he is to make up for it and is unanimously considered a sinner."

To whom fast-breaking alms are given:

In the Hadith of ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, he said, "The Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has ordained the fast-breaking zakat as a purification for the fasting person from vain talk and obscenity and as a feeding for the needy." [Reported by Abu Dawud and authenticated by Al-Albani]

«عن ابن عباس قال: فرض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم زكاة الفطر طهرة للصائم من اللغو والرفث وطعمة للمساكين» رواه أبو داود وصححه الألباني

In this Hadith, it is paid to the needy and not to any others. Sheikh of Islam Ibn Taymiyyah, may Allah have mercy on him, said, "It is not permissible to be paid but only for those who deserve to be given the expiations; those who take for their own need."



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A group of people or a family can pay their zakat to one needy and the zakat of one person can be divided into more than one needy for a severe need. It must, however, be paid to the same needy or to his/her deputy who is authorized to receive it.

Paying the money value of the fast-breaking zakat

It is not permissible to pay the fast-breaking zakat in money "instead of it in grains and fruits" as the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, stipulated the kinds of food although their money value is known. If the money value had been sufficed, the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, would have showed that. It is not allowed to delay declaration from the time of need. In addition, it is not known that any of the companions of the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, paid the fast-breaking zakat as money – though they were able to do that in their time. They are the best knowing persons about his Sunnah and the extremely keen persons to follow his way. Furthermore, paying the zakat as money leads to hiding such great rite; it leads people to ignore its rulings and underestimate it.

Imam Ahmed said, "One is not to pay the money value for it. It is said to him, some people say: Umar ibn Abdul-Aziz used to take the money? He said: they leave the saying of the Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, and say: so-and-so said". In addition, Ibn Umar said "The Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has ordained the fast-breaking zakat." [Agreed upon]

«فرض رسول الله صلى الله عليه وسلم زكاة الفطر» متفق عليه

I said: paying the money value instead of food is not permissible as it contradicts the saying and deed of the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, of his companions and followers – even if some scholars said that. What is important is what has been proved about the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, not those men who contradict his guidance. Ibn Abbas, may Allah be pleased with him and his father, said "Stones from the heaven are about to fall on you. I say to you the Messenger of Allah, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, has said and you say Abu Bakr and Umar said!!"

Transferring the fast-breaking zakat from one's country to another

The basis is that a person is to pay his/her fast-breaking zakat to the poor people in



which the zakat is obligatory while he/she is there. It is obligated to be paid by the sunset of the eve of the feast. Transferring it to another country leads to the delay in giving it in its due time. It may lead to pay the money value of it, and thus to hide such rite and the people's ignorance of the Sunnah of the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, about it.

It is not proved that the Prophet, prayers and peace of Allah be upon him, or any of his Caliphs or any of the companions, may Allah be pleased with them, according to my knowledge, have transferred it from Medina to another place. Accordingly, transferring it in our current time, from once society to another, as some call for that, is a heresy that must be warned against. People must be warned against the contravention of such act. We seek help from Allah.

As for a person who entrusts his/her family to pay the zakat in the country where they live, while he/she lives in another country, such matter is not related to this issue. Transferring the zakat of one country to another is the issue that may lead to the previous contradictions, that is why I call the attention to it. Prayers and peace of Allah be upon our Prophet Muhammad and upon all his family and companions.

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